



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

TEN NAMED IN FEDERAL MARIJUANA CONSPIRACY

Total street value is estimated in the thousands

BOSTON—A federal indictment was unsealed late yesterday charging ten individuals with conspiring to distribute at least 100 kilograms of marijuana in the Billerica area of Massachusetts.

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan and Robin M. Avers, Special Agent-in-Charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in New England, announced today the unsealing of a four-count Indictment charging ten individuals with Conspiracy to Distribute Marijuana and Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute. One of the defendants is also charged with one count of maintaining a Drug Involved Premises.

According to the indictment and other documents previously filed with the court, the defendants were part of a large-scale marijuana distribution conspiracy involving the shipment of 1,000 to 1,500 pounds at a time of Mexican-grown marijuana from Texas to Massachusetts where it would be sold.

Named in the indictment are:

1. William Stanley, age 43, of Waltham, MA;
2. John Manning, age 42, of Waltham, MA;
3. Felix Parra-Gastelom, age 42, of Mexico;
4. Jose Luis Arellano, age 49, of Laredo, TX;
5. Anthony Saunders, age 40, of West Newton, MA;
6. Richard Adams, age 51, of Revere, MA;
7. Kevin McIver, age 41, of Billerica, MA;
8. Frederick Pidge, age 53, of Billerica, MA;
9. Leon Romprey, age 62, of Rumney, NH; and
10. Sandra Saunders, age 59, of Rumney, NH.

It is alleged that Parra-Gastelom and Arellano arranged for a tractor-trailer driver to drive a truckload of marijuana from Laredo, Texas to Boston, Massachusetts. Unbeknownst to Parra-Gastelom and Arellano, the driver they hired for \$50,000 to transport the shipment of marijuana was an undercover ICE agent. It is

alleged that Parra-Gastelom dealt in loads of marijuana of 1,000 to 1,500 pounds at a time. On Nov. 5, 2004, the undercover agents departed Laredo, Texas for Boston with the truckload of Marijuana. It is alleged that the marijuana had been loaded on the truck in a warehouse by Arellano and was concealed behind a "cover-load" of used computer parts.

On Nov.8, 2004, after the undercover agents arrived in the Boston area, they were directed by Stanley, acting for Parra-Gastelom, to a warehouse in Billerica. It is alleged that the marijuana was unloaded from the tractor-trailer by Adams, Stanley and Manning.

After the tractor-trailer was unloaded, it is alleged that Manning drove away from the warehouse in a pick up truck owed by Pidge with four containers in the bed of the truck. Law enforcement stopped the vehicle and following a search found that each of the containers was packed with cellophane-wrapped "bricks" of marijuana. Each brick, weighing from 7 to 8 pounds, was greased and covered with coffee grounds to conceal the odor. A total of 76 bricks, weighing approximately 532 pounds, were recovered.

Also that afternoon, it is alleged that Sandra Saunders arrived at the warehouse driving a white van with Romprey as a passenger. It is alleged that Stanley and Romprey helped load several large trash bags into the van. Law enforcement stopped the van and found 14 large trash bags also containing cellophane-wrapped bricks of marijuana that were greased and covered in coffee grounds. A total of 67 bricks, weighing approximately 469 pounds, were recovered.

It is alleged that McIver owned the warehouse in Billerica where the shipment of marijuana was unloaded and distributed to other co-conspirators.

McIver and Pidge were arrested yesterday on the charges in the Indictment. Stanley and Manning were previously arrested in November 2004 on a criminal complaint in connection with this case. Parra-Gastelom, Arellano, Sandra Saunders, Romprey and Adams were also previously arrested in connection with this case on a complaint in December 2004. Following their arrests, Manning and McIver were released on conditions set by the Court, the other seven defendants who were arrested remain in federal custody. Anthony Saunders is still at large.

If convicted, Stanley, Sandra Saunders, Adams and Pidge each face a maximum sentence of life imprisonment on the conspiracy and possession charges. Romprey, McIver, Manning, Parra-Gastelom, Arellano, and Anthony Saunders face a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison on those charges. McIver also faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison on the count of Maintaining a Drug Premises with which he is charged.

The case was investigated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Boston and Laredo, Texas. Investigative assistance was provided by the Massachusetts State Police, Boston Police Department, MBTA Police, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nancy Rue in Sullivan's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Unit.

The details contained in the Indictment are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.